

# THE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY  
CALIFORNIA  
ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

AUG 26 2008

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FOUNDED 1917



Bob Lewis

GGA's Bob Lewis helps North Richmond Shoreline Academy participants hone their birding skills.

## Community Hails New Eco-Richmond Program

**W**ith its 500 acres of tidal marshes and 800 acres of mudflats, the North Richmond shoreline is one of only three areas along the Pacific Coast to host large numbers of Red Knots, designated as a Species of High Concern by the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan. The shoreline—an Audubon Important Bird Area—also supports San Francisco Bay's largest eelgrass bed, habitat for salmon and Pacific herring. Yet despite years of grassroots activism to preserve the shoreline and adjacent open space, this area is still threatened by development. Golden Gate Audubon's goal is to connect the community with the shoreline, empowering residents to enjoy and protect this habitat.

In 1999, we launched our Eco-Oakland Program, establishing a year-round, hands-on environmental education program within the community of East Oakland. Partnering with the East Bay Regional Park District and using the Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline as a base for exploration and study, Eco-Oakland has reached over 15,000 ethnically diverse students and their family members, inspiring them to protect their environment.

Our vision for Eco-Richmond arose both from our Oakland experience as well as from our community-based conservation efforts in North Richmond, where we

ECO-RICHMOND continued on page 12

## Agreement Minimizes Impacts to Marsh

**G**olden Gate Audubon recently settled a major lawsuit over construction of a 24-hour trucking terminal immediately adjacent to East Oakland's Martin Luther King, Jr. Shoreline Regional Park. Nestled amidst urban development and in the shadow of the Oakland airport, the MLK Shoreline includes one of the most important wetland complexes in central San Francisco Bay, hosting hundreds of shorebirds and waterfowl each year. It is also home to roughly five percent of the world's endangered California Clapper Rail population and provides habitat for endangered California Least Terns, Brown Pelicans, and the endangered Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse.

In fall 2007, Golden Gate Audubon filed a lawsuit against the Port of Oakland and developer Swan Terminal for failure to perform adequate environmental review of the project's impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Our concerns included the impacts of constant light and noise from the trucking terminal on birds in the adjacent wetlands, as well as the project's impacts on human visitors to the park. Golden Gate Audubon worked closely with biological experts to identify the most significant impacts and, in May 2008, reached an agreement with Swan Terminal that compels the company to mitigate the project's impacts. Swan Terminal agreed to construct a

MARSH continued on page 8



INSIDE

- 3 Lights Out for Migrating Birds
- 4 Tern Tour
- 9 Fall Classes in SF and Oakland



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The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Supporting Membership is \$25 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. The board of directors meets six times per year (schedule can be obtained from the main office).

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Design and layout e.g. communications

## New Faces and Changes

We are pleased to introduce three new members of Golden Gate Audubon's board of directors, plus a new board president, two new staff members, and new office space. We also express heartfelt thanks to two outstanding board members, who have retired.

Our new directors are **Mark Mushkat**, Finance Committee Chair, who has a long commitment to ornithology through birding organizations, trips, education programs, and volunteer efforts, including with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and as a board member of the Connecticut Ornithological Association. A San Francisco resident, Mark is managing director of Harris myCFO, a wealth advisory company in Menlo Park.

**Beth Slatkin**, Publications Committee Chair, is an interactive media producer for organizations such as The Nature Conservancy, Oakland's Environmental Law Foundation, and currently PRBO Conservation Science, where she is helping scientists develop the California Avian Data Center, an online collaboration with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. She has also worked in magazine publishing and as a reporter for national and local newspapers.

**Rich Walkling**, Volunteer and Member Committee Chair, is business manager with Restoration Design Group, an environmental restoration and landscape firm. Rich designed and manages watershed planning and restoration projects on the North Richmond shoreline, working with community volunteers to monitor creeks and restore native oysters to San Pablo Bay. While with the Natural Heritage Institute, he co-wrote a grant with Golden Gate Audubon to fund the current Richmond Shoreline bird census.

Four-year board members **Judith Dunham** and **Elizabeth Yates McNamee** both retired on July 1. As Publications Committee Chair, Judith worked to redesign and improve the Golden Gate Audubon website and *The Gull*, produce beautiful brochures, and create the stunning 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary historic timeline. Under her professional editorship, the look, content, and timeliness of *The Gull* have vastly improved. As chair of the Development Committee, Elizabeth contributed her professional expertise to organize and strengthen our fundraising efforts through foundation and donor relationships and an expanded membership program. She also served on the Board Development Committee, recruiting new board members, and organized and chaired Golden Gate Audubon's highly successful 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary event in 2007. Our deepest gratitude to Judith and Elizabeth for all of their many contributions!

In July, **Diane Ross-Leech**, who has served as Volunteer and Member Committee Chair, was elected president of the board, replacing two-term **Marjorie Blackwell**, who was elected board vice-president. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Marj for her tremendous leadership over the past three years.

**Linda Coffee** is our new Development Manager. Linda brings extensive experience in fundraising, having worked in individual donor programs at the Trust for Public Land and the Sierra Club's national office, where she most recently managed the Club's planned giving program.

**Lisa Owens Viani** is editing *The Gull* on a contract basis. Lisa is also managing editor of ESTUARY newsletter, published by the San Francisco Estuary Project, editor of *The State of the Estuary* and other reports, and a nationally published freelance writer. Familiar to many Golden Gate Audubon members, Lisa is founder of Keep Barn Owls in Berkeley and a volunteer for WildCare's Hungry Owl Project. We welcome both Lisa and Linda!

—Elizabeth Murdock

Golden Gate Audubon has moved, but not far. We are in the same building, right next door to our old office, in an expanded space to support our growing staff and volunteer corps. Our address and phone numbers have not changed. We moved into the new space on August 1 and are still getting settled. Come in and visit our expanded Nature Store and be sure to check the Golden Gate Audubon website for an official office warming party, probably in early October.





## LIGHTS OUT FOR BIRDS

Over 200 species of birds migrate through San Francisco each year, including Neotropical migrants such as warblers, thrushes, and tanagers. Most birds migrate at night, and studies show they are often drawn off course by tall, lighted structures in their flight path. Scientists aren't sure why this happens, but it may be related to the fact that among many navigational cues, birds use the stars to stay on course. Lighted skyscrapers may simply confuse them: as a result, birds sometimes strike the buildings or rooftop structures. Once among the lights, birds seem reluctant to fly away and often continue flying around the lighted buildings until they drop, exhausted, to the rooftop or the ground.



Bob Lewis

Hermit Thrush.

To minimize these threats, Golden Gate Audubon is working to implement a Lights Out program, which can dramatically reduce bird/building collisions, decrease unnecessary night lighting in San Francisco, conserve resources, save money, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and ultimately increase the visibility of the night sky. In 2007, our San Francisco Conservation Committee asked members to minimize their use of lights during migration season and to consider using motion detectors instead of keeping outside lights on all the time. On July 21, 2008, GGA joined with the Department of the Environment and the American Bird Conservancy to ask San Francisco's Commission on the Environment Policy Committee to review a proposal to expand the Lights Out program in San



San Francisco's nighttime skyline is gorgeous but can be fatal to migrating birds.

Francisco. The San Francisco Conservation Committee gave the city background about the timing of migration to help it establish when lights should be shut off. The Commissioners supported the proposal, which encourages downtown building owners to turn off unnecessary lights at night and identifies 44 of the city's tallest buildings as potential Lights Out sites.

If you are interested in participating in this program please contact Noreen Weeden at [noreenweedenggas@yahoo.com](mailto:noreenweedenggas@yahoo.com). We will need volunteers to help with outreach and in surveying buildings.

—Noreen Weeden

## VOLUNTEER THANK YOU PARTY!

**Saturday September 13, noon–3 p.m.**

To toast our amazing volunteers, Golden Gate Audubon will hold a Thank You Party at Crissy Field in San Francisco. We will have an outdoor picnic at the Crissy Field Amphitheater by the Warming Hut and take advantage of this great viewing area to observe Western Snowy Plovers. Bring your family and GGA friends along to enjoy good food, bird walks, and other fun activities. A highlight of the event will be a presentation of Golden Gate Audubon conservation and education awards to some of our outstanding volunteers.

For directions to the site, go to: [www.parksconservancy.org/visit](http://www.parksconservancy.org/visit) Public transportation to the Presidio is available through MUNI buses #28 and #29. To plan your trip on public transit, visit: [www.511.org](http://www.511.org). Also check out the PresidioGo: [www.presidio.gov/directions/presidigo.htm](http://www.presidio.gov/directions/presidigo.htm).

And while you're visiting the Presidio, stroll over to the Gulf of the Farallones Visitor Center or Fort Point, or join a GGNRA Big Year program for the day.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AND EVENTS

**Sunday, September 14, 9 am–noon.**

Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge workday. Come help us prepare habitat for California Least Terns! Meet at the main refuge gate at the northwest corner of former Alameda Naval Air Station, Alameda.

**Saturday, September 20, 9 am–noon.**

Join more than 50,000 conservation advocates from across the state at the 24th Annual California Coastal Cleanup Day. Since 1985, more than 750,000 Californians have turned out for what the Guinness Book of World Records call "the largest garbage collection." We'll host a site at Pier 94, in conjunction with Literacy for Environmental Justice efforts to clean up San Francisco's southern waterfront and the Bayview/Hunters Point neighborhood.

If you'd like to participate, please RSVP by Wednesday, September 17, to Jennifer Robinson at 510.919.5873, or [jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org](mailto:jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org).

**Saturday, September 27, 9 am–noon.**

We are starting another season of California Quail habitat restoration at Harding Park. Meet at the parking lot at the corner of Sunset Blvd. and Lake Merced Blvd. at the statue.

For more information on any of these activities or events, or for directions to any of the sites, please contact Jennifer Robinson, Golden Gate Audubon's Volunteer Coordinator, at [jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org](mailto:jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org).



# Return of the Terns

**O**n a sun-drenched June afternoon, several dozen people boarded a yellow school bus to view one of San Francisco Bay's most thrilling natural spectacles: the return of the California Least Terns to the proposed Alameda National Wildlife Refuge at Alameda Point. Each spring for the past 30 years, the terns have been making a 2,700–3,000-mile journey from Central America to breed at Alameda's former naval air station. The Alameda refuge is considered the largest and most critical in Northern and Central California for this endangered species.

Though the terns were only a five-minute ride away, the journey through the former naval base took us to another place and time. Off-limits to the public except for an annual guided tour, the terns' site is a fenced-off 9.6-acre area at the north end of the refuge, directly east of what was once the main runway. Ghosts of the past hung in the air as we passed Pier 3, home of the fabled USS Hornet, a WWII carrier that participated in the Battle of Midway and ferried the B-25 bombers that launched the daring "Doolittle Raid" on Japan in 1942. By the war's end, over 29,000 personnel and 3,600 officers lived here; now a new breed of aviators is berthed at the base—gray-and-white winged, yellow-billed migrants with striking black caps.

As the bus rumbled up the windswept expanse of former naval buildings and airplane hangars, our guide, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) biologist Susan Euing, shared a bit of history. The terns began breeding here in 1976; they were first noticed by

## Terns on Parade

Least Terns caught the eyes and admiration of Alameda residents when GGA refuge supporters marched for 3.5 miles in the city's 4th of July parade carrying heavy wooden tern puppets made by volunteers. The stalwart group won first place in the "walking, skating, bicycling" category.



Left to right: Carol Baxter, Cordelia Holsonback-Master, Melissa Feeney (in sunglasses), Jazz Bronghton, Camille McDonald, USFWS' Christy Smith (with hand raised), Leora Feeney, and Joyce Larrick.



California Least Tern.

Bob Lewis

the wife of the base commander, who placed logs around the nesting area to protect eggs and chicks from military vehicles. They have returned to the same spot ever since to nest and raise their young. Today, this is the most significant northern breeding colony of this endangered tern—and it is critical to the recovery of the entire subspecies.

We made a left turn and Euing disembarked to open a gate to offer us a closer view of the breeding grounds, a barren, sandy lot with a panoramic view of the San Francisco skyline. We were not allowed to step off the bus to view the terns lest we disturb them. Only Euing and trained staff can enter the colony grounds with the birds; for four months each year, she monitors their population, behavior, diet, and nesting success. For the past two years, Golden Gate Audubon's Friends of the Alameda Refuge (FAWR) committee has bolstered USFWS's Tern Watch program by helping monitor the colony through the nesting season.

The nesting area at first looked completely empty. The flat, open space, with neither shade nor rocks, highlighted the vulnerability of these shorebirds, who must defend their young against airborne enemies, such as harriers and shrikes, and mammals such as raccoons, rats, possums, and feral cats. Two fences surround the site—a chain-link fence to discourage predators and a foot-high plastic mesh barrier attached to the bottom to keep chicks inside. In 2006, two burrowing owls soared over the fence and severely impacted the colony, killing many chicks and adults until the owls were found and humanely trapped.

The bus came to a stop but didn't turn off its engine to avoid further disturbance. At first, we couldn't see anything; then, a single adult flew into view. Slowly our eyes adjusted to make out a lone nesting female, then another, and yet another—spaced 1–20 feet apart in all directions. Small numbered signs marked each nest site. Last spring, Golden Gate Audubon volunteers had equipped the nest sites with wooden A-frame shelters and terracotta tile pipes for the birds as well as oyster shells to protect chicks from the sun, wind, and even predators. Tern eggs are laid in a shallow depression



in the sand; the typical clutch size is two, which the female incubates for three weeks. After hatching, the chicks quickly learn to walk and run, fledging within a month. As of mid-July, Euing had counted 336 nests—lower than in some recent years, but a far cry from the 10 breeding pairs first noted 30 years ago.

Euing had requested that we keep our voices low so as not to frighten the terns, but as the first chick was sighted, the crowd erupted in gasps of amazement. The chick, not much bigger than a good-sized cotton ball, was half-hidden by its mother's wing. Armed with spotting scopes and telephoto lenses, our group quickly honed in on two more chicks—one running towards its mother on tiny matchstick legs, the other slightly larger and more independent—their brown and white speckled down mimicking the gravel beneath. Several adult terns flew in and out with morsels grabbed from the Bay, possibly from nearby Crab Cove, where we later watched one repeatedly dive-bombing for small fish like anchovies, herring, and top smelt.



*A young Least Tern tests its wings. GGA volunteers place oyster shells and terra cotta tiles on the barren lot to help protect the chicks from predators.*

On the ride back we learned about the challenges to the refuge. We heard about Golden Gate Audubon's 13-year effort to convince the Navy to transfer the site to the USFWS and to create the Alameda National Wildlife Refuge, converting the

former airbase into a permanent, protected nesting place for terns, and a haven for other birds—nearly 150 species use the site and 23 nest there.

This year, the Return of the Terns tour was a sold-out event, with a record 168 visitors filling four school buses. As we left this protected Twilight Zone it was tempting to imagine the ghosts of the base—especially the Navy pilots—enjoying the peaceful site while savoring the dazzling aerial displays of the agile, feathered navigators.

## Creating the Alameda Refuge

For 13 years, Golden Gate Audubon has been the leading organization advocating for the creation of the Alameda National Wildlife Refuge and the protection of Alameda's California Least Tern colony.

The idea of a refuge began to take shape after the government decided to close the Alameda Naval Air Station in 1993. Golden Gate Audubon organized a day-long seminar for bird and wildlife biologists the following year at The College of Alameda—a gathering originally designated as a “swan song” for the effort to save the terns, according to Leora Feeney, one of the founders of GGA's Friends of the Alameda Refuge (FAWR) committee. The symposium yielded data showing the refuge to be one of the most ecologically rich habitats in San Francisco Bay, home to 150 bird species, a critical colony of endangered Least Terns, and the most important Brown Pelican roosting area in the Bay.

The area is so important for birds that feed on fish, says Feeney, partly due to its location near the highest concentration of fish in the Bay, a “magnet for all organisms that feed on fish.” Keeping the site's adjacent Bay feeding grounds free from disturbances is essential to keeping the terns, pelicans, and other shorebird and seabird populations healthy. “The refuge is really important, not only because it's the only remaining location of its kind in a crowded metropolis, but because it's the most convenient location for [feeding young]. Even if there's lots of food in the Bay, there are few places for birds to nest. That's why we find

cormorants nesting on the Bay Bridge and Least Terns nesting at an airport near their preferred food resources,” explains Feeney.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), which currently manages the site, has officially requested that the Navy transfer to it the entire 579-acre refuge site, plus 375 acres of critical foraging areas in Bay waters, as well as funds to maintain it. Unfortunately, an impasse over future liability for toxins cleanup has prevented the transfer to USFWS. In the meantime, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has proposed building a massive development (a mausoleum, columbarium, administrative buildings, clinics, and a hospital) within the boundaries of the refuge site. Despite USFWS's still-pending request to acquire the site as a national wildlife refuge, the Navy is currently pursuing independent plans to transfer the site to the VA for development.

In late 2007, GGA learned that the Navy and VA were considering a shortcut to the environmental review required to transfer the site to the VA and planning to review only the impacts of transferring the site while disregarding the impacts of the VA's proposed construction on the site. Golden Gate Audubon partnered with Earthjustice to urge the Navy to conduct the full environmental review as required by federal law, to remind the Navy of its legal responsibility to protect the federally endangered terns, and to stress that transfer to USFWS was a more appropriate alternative for protecting the terns. In June, the VA confirmed that they would conduct full environmental review, as we requested. In the meantime, we continue to work towards the creation of the Alameda National Wildlife Refuge—and to work collaboratively with the VA to help them identify a more appropriate location for their facilities.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

If you are interested in supporting our efforts to create the Alameda Refuge, please contact Jenn Robinson at [jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org](mailto:jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org). Opportunities include advocacy, habitat restoration, tern monitoring, and joining the FAWR Committee.

—Beth Slatkin



# FIELD TRIPS

PAM BELCHAMBER, COORDINATOR

\$ Entrance fee

 Biking trip

For questions about individual field trips, contact the leaders. If you cannot reach a leader, contact Pam Belchamber at 510.549.2839. Field trips are also listed on the Golden Gate Audubon website at [www.goldengateaudubon.org](http://www.goldengateaudubon.org).

## Jewel Lake in Tilden

Berkeley

Friday, September 5,

8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Phila Rogers, 510.848.9156,

[philajane6@yahoo.com](mailto:philajane6@yahoo.com)

The first Friday of the month walk will resume on Friday, September 5th. Meet at the parking lot at the north end of Central Park Dr. for a one-mile, two-hour plus stroll through this lush riparian area. Berries are ripening and migration is under way: always time for surprises!

## Birding for Everyone

San Francisco Botanical Garden at

Strybing Arboretum

Saturday, September 6, 10 a.m. – noon

Angie Geiger and Nancy DeStefanis, SF Nature Education, Darin Dawson, SF Botanical Garden Docent, 415.387.9160; [www.sfnature.org](http://www.sfnature.org)

Meet for this monthly trip at the kiosk/bookstore at front gate of Botanical Garden, Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way. Families welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Co-sponsored by Botanical Garden, San Francisco Nature Education, and Golden Gate Audubon Society.

## San Francisco Botanical Gardens

Golden Gate Park, San Francisco

Sunday, September 7, 8 a.m. – 10:30 am

Alan Ridley, [allanrid@pacbell.net](mailto:allanrid@pacbell.net); Helen McKenna, 415.566.3241; Ginny Marshall, 650.349.3780

Meet at 8 a.m. at the front gate of the Botanical Garden at Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way. This delightful section of Golden Gate Park has several micro-habitats that attract an array of resident, migrant, and vagrant birds. This regular monthly trip is oriented toward beginning birders.

## Martin Luther King, Jr. Shoreline

Arrowhead Marsh, Oakland

Monday, September 8, 9:30 am – noon

Bob Lewis, [bob@wingbeats.org](mailto:bob@wingbeats.org)

Join Bob Lewis on the first Monday in September at Arrowhead Marsh at the MLK Shoreline, noted for Clapper Rails, Sora, and Virginia Rails. We will look for returning shorebirds and waterfowl. The tide will be moderate, so we may see a Clapper Rail walking across the mudflats. Take Hwy 880 towards the Oakland Airport. Exit at Hegenberger Road, going West. Turn right on Doolittle, and left on Swan Way. Turn left into the MLK Shoreline Regional Park, and continue to the end of the road. Meet at the last parking lot at 9:30 a.m.

## Coastal San Francisco

Saturday, September 13, 8 a.m.

Dan Murphy, 415.564.0074, [murphsf@comcast.net](mailto:murphsf@comcast.net)

Meet in the parking lot between South and Middle Lakes (Chain of Lakes) near the 41st Avenue and Lincoln Way entrance to Golden Gate Park. We will bird in Golden Gate Park, at Lake Merced, and in the National Recreation Area in search of migrating flycatchers, warblers, sparrows, and other vagrants. Bring lunch and be prepared for cold weather near the coast.

## Aquatic Park

San Francisco

Sunday, September 14, 9:30 a.m.

SF Maritime National Historical Park Ranger Carol Kiser, 415.561.7100 or -7104 Meet at 9:30 a.m. at foot of Hyde Street Pier (Hyde and Jefferson) for this two-hour, one mile, beginners bird walk to discover birds in the urban environment. Some hills and stairs. Dress in layers; bring binoculars and bird books.

## Corona Heights

San Francisco

Friday, September 19, 8 a.m. – 10 a.m.

Charles Hibbard; Lewis Ellingham; Brian Fitch; Margaret Goodale, [mgoodale@randallmuseum.org](mailto:mgoodale@randallmuseum.org), 415.554.9600 x16 Meet in front of Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, at end of Museum Way off Roosevelt. We will enjoy views of the city and bay as we circle Corona Heights, checking east canyon woodland and north forest for residents and migrants, as well as monitoring hilltop scrub and south cliff.

## Lincoln Park Bird Walk

San Francisco

Sunday, September 21, 8 a.m. – 11 a.m.

David Armstrong, 650.922.6380, [darmstrong99@yahoo.com](mailto:darmstrong99@yahoo.com)

Meet on Merrie Way, parking lot up the hill from the Cliff House, for this walking tour of some of San Francisco's finest fall birding locations. We will cover about three miles of varied terrain (short climbs and stairs) in search of migrants and vagrants. Trip is limited to 20 people; contact trip leader after September 2 to reserve a place, email preferred.

## Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

Oakland

Wednesday, September 24,

9:30 a.m. – noon

Hilary Powers, 510.834.1066, [hilary@powersedit.com](mailto:hilary@powersedit.com); Ruth Tobey, 510.528.2093, [ruth@earthlink.net](mailto:ruth@earthlink.net)

Join us at large spherical cage near Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue. We will bird around there, then go up the garden path toward Children's Fairyland or walk down the lake toward Embarcadero, after which we will cover what we missed. We should start to see some returning migrants. We'll be on the lookout for Ruddy Ducks, warblers, and a few surprises.

Take 12, N, or NL bus to Grand and Perkins, and walk into park on Perkins. Best parking at boathouse lot near spherical cage. Entry (via Bellevue near Children's Fairyland) is free on weekdays.



## Oyster Bay Bicycle Trip

San Leandro to Hayward Shoreline  
Interpretive Center on the SF Bay Trail  
Alameda County

**Saturday, September 27**

Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233,  
kathy\_jarrett@yahoo.com

Meet at 8:40 a.m. at San Leandro BART station following 8:35 arrival of train from Richmond, ride 2.5 miles to trailhead via Williams St. (bike lanes), or meet at 9 am at Oyster Bay Parking area. This trip lasts into the afternoon.

We will start with a short foray to Oyster Bay EBRP to look for shorebirds and gulls and see this relatively new park near the Oakland airport, then continue south through the San Leandro Marina to the Hayward Shoreline Regional Park, and the Hayward Shoreline Interpretive Center, making about a 20 mile round trip. High tide is just after noon. Shorebirds should be flushed in by the tide. Some parts of the trails are paved, and others easily negotiable. Dress for variable weather. Bicycle helmet required. Bring lunch and liquids. Rain cancels. All levels of birders and bicyclists welcome. Reservations not necessary but an e-mail or phone call would be appreciated.

Directions by car: To Oyster Bay: From I-880 in San Leandro, exit at Marina Blvd. and drive west. Turn right onto Neptune Drive. Parking is at the end of Neptune Drive.

To San Leandro Marina: From 880 in San Leandro, take the Marina Blvd. exit (west) and in 1.4 mi turn left onto Monarch Bay Dr. Go to the end to the last parking lot at San Leandro Marina Park. You may prefer to park here so your bicycle is at the trailhead at the end of the trip. Oyster Bay is approximately 2 miles north. Allow time to get your BART ticket processed and your bicycle to the platform. Info and maps online: BART schedules <http://www.transitinfo.org>

S.F. Bay Trail <http://baytrail.abag.ca.gov/>

East Bay Regional Park District <http://www.ebparks.org>

## Monterey Bay from Santa Cruz Shearwater Journeys

**Friday, September 26 and Sunday,  
October 12; 7 a.m. – 3 p.m.**

Debi Shearwater 831.637.8527,  
debi@shearwaterjourneys.com

Shearwater Journeys, providing seabirding trips since 1976, will sail from Santa Cruz (exact dock location to be determined) for a fall bird trip in North Monterey Bay.



Red-throated Loon.

Lee Karney

Meet at 7 am in the Upper Yacht Harbor, Santa Cruz. New boat with galley. Only two trips will be offered this year. This is the peak of fall seabird migration, and we could see up to 8 species of shearwaters; 4-5 species of storm-petrels, a good variety of alcids, all three jaegers, South Polar Skua, Sabine's Gull, Arctic Tern, as well as a variety of marine mammals, including Humpback Whales. The Santa Cruz trips have a 90% success rate finding Marbled Murrelets. Visit [www.shearwaterjourneys.com](http://www.shearwaterjourneys.com) to read trip reports about the Santa Cruz bird sightings as well as other surprises. Fall is the optimum time to enjoy this trip on Monterey Bay. Cost of the trip is \$115 to GGAS members and \$145.00 non-members; trips sell out early! To reserve your space, send a check to: **Shearwater Journeys, P.O. Box 190, Hollister CA 95024**, (no refunds). Along with your payment also include the **date of the trip, noting that you are a GGAS member**. Also include a phone number and e-mail address (if available) for each member of your party and a self-addressed stamped envelope. A small fuel surcharge may be required the day of the trip. Trip details will be mailed to you upon payment.

## Hawk Hill

Marin County

**Sunday, October 12, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

Pamela Llewellyn (former GGRO volunteer), 510.843.7904,  
seacreature219@sbcglobal.net

**Group size is limited. Contact leader for sign-up.** Hawk Hill, part of the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory (GGRO), located in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, is the premier hawk-watch location in the West. Join us during the autumn migration, when thousands of birds of prey, including up to 19 species, cross over the Marin Headlands during their southern migration. Bring lunch and liquids, sunscreen, and hat. Layered clothing advisable. Parking limited; car-pool if possible.

From south, cross Golden Gate Bridge and take second exit, Alexander Ave. Get in left lane following signs to 101 San Francisco. Turn left at stop sign and cross under freeway. Turn right onto Conzelman Rd. and drive 1.8 mi. to Hawk Hill. Park and walk up hill past the locked gate. From north, take last Sausalito exit to GGNRA. Turn left at stop sign. Go up hill. Meet at platform with wing span diagrams.

## Napa River Birding Cruise

Vallejo Marina, Vallejo

**Friday, November 7, 9:15 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

Pamela Llewellyn, 510.843.7904,  
seacreature219@sbcglobal.net

GGAS is offering another of its popular Napa River trips. If you've always wanted to see and bird the Napa River this is your opportunity. The M/V Delphinus will leave from "K" dock at the Vallejo Marina promptly at 9:30 a.m. to take advantage of the low tide. Come join us for a five hour birding trip by boat; the tide will be falling, and the birds should be great. Bring binoculars, lunch, and appropriate clothing. Trip is limited to 32 participants. Cost is \$80 for members and \$90 for non-members. Reserve your space by contacting Kristen Bunting at GGAS office at 510.843.2222 or [ggas@goldengateaudubon.org](mailto:ggas@goldengateaudubon.org). Payment must be received by October 10 to reserve your space.

From the East Bay: Take Hwy. 80 East towards Sacramento. Cross Carquinez Bridge (\$4. toll), stay in right lanes. Exit at Sonoma Blvd. and continue in left lane until the Curtola Parkway intersection (stoplight) and jog left onto Mare Island Way. Go past the Vallejo Ferry Terminal and turn left at the stoplight onto Harbor Way. Turn left into the first driveway and park. A crew member will meet you at the gate for "K" dock. (Harbormaster's office is too far.)



# SPEAKER SERIES

SARAH REED, COORDINATOR

Talks in the Speaker Series begin at 7:30 p.m.

## Tracking Bay Area Birds with the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory

Stephanie Ellis

**Berkeley: Thursday, September 18**

Birds are excellent indicators of ecosystem health, sensitive to the slightest environmental change. The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory pays close attention to impacts on birds and their habitats and gathers crucial data specific to bird populations in the South Bay. Stephanie will discuss numerous projects the Bird Observatory conducts to save our native birds, including the Avian Disease Prevention Project. Find out about the Bird Observatory's 25-plus years of landbird and colonial waterbird research, and its leadership of the Bay's Western Snowy Plover recovery effort. Please join us for this fun and informative talk.

Stephanie Ellis is the Outreach and Programs Coordinator for the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory. She recently moved to California from Massachusetts where she worked for nearly a decade rehabilitating a wide array of species from Atlantic Puffins to state threatened Diamondback Terrapin turtles. Through the Massachusetts Audubon Society Stephanie was also actively involved in restoration efforts involving Piping Plover and Least Tern colonies on the East Coast.

## The Rare Loggerhead Shrike on Santa Cruz Island

Julia Hicks

**San Francisco: Tuesday, September 23**

The Island Loggerhead Shrike is a subspecies of Loggerhead Shrike that occurs only on Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, and Santa Catalina islands off the coast of California, and is believed to be in very low numbers. Survey efforts are taking place as part of a pre-listing action for the shrike to help determine its abundance on Santa Cruz Island. In May of 2008, Julia Hicks, of Island Loggerhead Shrike Force, led a Golden Gate Audubon field trip to Santa Cruz Island to survey Santa Cruz Island Loggerhead Shrikes (*Lanius Ludovicianus Anthonyi*) to locate as many shrike pairs as possible during the course of the weekend. Participants observed the shrikes and looked for nests. Some important aspects of shrike observation include looking out for competitors such as the Island Scrub Jay, and noting the diet and foraging habits of the shrike. Join us to learn more about Julia's research and this elusive bird.



Island Loggerhead Shrike.

Julia Hicks

**Julia Hicks** received her bachelor's degree in Geography at UCLA in 2007. She achieved departmental honors for the work that she did on the Island Loggerhead Shrike on Santa Cruz Island. *L. l. anthonyi* is listed as a species of special concern by the California Department of Fish and Game, but the status of the island population has received little attention. In July, Julia's paper, "Population Decline of the Island Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus anthonyi*) in the Northern California Channel Islands," was accepted for publication in the *Wilson Journal of Ornithology*. Julia plans to continue her research in the hope that her efforts will contribute to the conservation of this rare island endemic.

**Berkeley:** Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (between Solano and Marin).

Directions: [www.northbrae.org/directions.htm](http://www.northbrae.org/directions.htm)

**San Francisco:** County Fair Building, SF Botanical Garden, Golden Gate Park, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way.

Directions: [www.sfbotanicalgarden.org/visiting/page2.html](http://www.sfbotanicalgarden.org/visiting/page2.html)

**MARSH** from page 1

sound wall along the border of their development in order to reduce noise and light impacts to the adjacent wetlands; to shield lights and move adjacent lighting structures farther from the marsh; to work with East Bay Regional Park District to plant native plants at the site; and to manage waste and noise on site in order to minimize impacts to wildlife.



Anthony De Cicco

A view of MLK Jr. Regional Shoreline.

Golden Gate Audubon also succeeded in compelling a full EIR prior to construction of a second terminal proposed at the site—a very important win for this sensitive habitat. We are now working to ensure that the EIR for the second terminal accurately and appropriately addresses the significant wildlife values of this site.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

Once the Draft EIR comes out, we'll need your help. You can write to the Port of Oakland to tell them how important the MLK Shoreline is for birds and wildlife—and to detail what kinds of birds you've seen at the park. Watch our website for information about submitting comments, or join our East Bay Conservation Committee (contact [robinson@goldengateaudubon.org](mailto:robinson@goldengateaudubon.org)) to get involved.

—Elizabeth Murdock

### Save these dates!

#### CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

**Oakland, December 14, 2008**

**San Francisco, December 30, 2008**





# CLASSES

## Fall East Bay Classes

Golden Gate Audubon is sponsoring six fall classes through the Albany Adult School, 601 San Gabriel Avenue, Albany. Register online at <http://albany.k12.ca.us/adult/> or call 510.559.6580 for more information.

### Birds of the Bay Area – Fall

Bob Lewis and Rusty Scalf

Wednesday, October 8 – November 12, 7 – 8 p.m., field trips October 11 to November 16.

Fall birding is exciting, with shorebirds and waterfowl returning to our area. Field trips are your choice, Saturday or Sunday morning; the last field trip, Nov 15/16 is weekend-long. [bob@wingbeats.org](mailto:bob@wingbeats.org), 510.845.5001, or [rscalf@sonic.net](mailto:rscalf@sonic.net) 510.666.9936

### Butterflies of the Sticks and Suburbs

Sallie Levinson

Tuesdays, September 9 – 23, 7 – 8:30 p.m., field trips (details announced in class) the following Saturdays around noon.

Exclusive video will reveal rarely seen details of the life cycle of butterflies. The class will also cover identification, butterfly gardening, and caterpillar rearing. On field trips, participants will look for field marks, behavior, and favored plants. [sal.levinson@gmail.com](mailto:sal.levinson@gmail.com) or [www.butterflygardener.com](http://www.butterflygardener.com)

### Birding By Ear - Fall Session #1

Denise Wight

Four Thursday Evenings, September 11 – October 2, 7 – 8:30 p.m. Four Saturday field trips, September 13 – October 4, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

### Fall Session #2

Thursdays, October 16 – November 6, 7 – 8:30 p.m. Four Saturday field trips, October 18 – 15 – November 8, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Now is a good time to study common local species and their sounds, as well as cover basic tips for birding by ear in fall and winter. Each session will cover a wide variety of habitats. Materials fee is \$10, payable to instructor. [blkittiwake@yahoo.com](mailto:blkittiwake@yahoo.com)

### Birds and Butterflies: Easy Garden Enchantment with Native Plants

Corinne Greenberg

Tuesdays, Oct 7 – 28, 7 – 9 p.m.

One field trip, Sat., Nov. 1, 8:45 – 10:45 a.m.

Welcome birds, butterflies, and other beneficial critters. Become captivated by native plants as you learn year-round ecological gardening. Materials fee \$5, payable to instructor. [Corinnelouisdesign@yahoo.com](mailto:Corinnelouisdesign@yahoo.com)

### Birding Basics

Anne Hoff

Wednesdays, Oct 1 – 29, 7 – 8 p.m. and four Saturday field trips.

This introduction to birding covers identification, habitats, and use of equipment. Learn to recognize common birds of the Bay Area and where to find them. [anne2210b@sbcglobal.net](mailto:anne2210b@sbcglobal.net)

### Shorebirds at the Oakland Museum

Bob Lewis

Tuesdays, September 9 – 23, 7 – 8:30 p.m., with field trips on the Saturday following each class, 9 – 11:30 a.m.

In autumn, shorebirds are migrating from their northern breeding grounds to their southern wintering areas—and many are stopping to rest and feed in San Francisco Bay. The class will be richly illustrated with digital slides of shorebirds of the world.

Location: Oakland Museum of California, 1000 Oak Street, near the Lake Merritt BART station; free parking is available in the museum's garage. The class limited to 25 participants, and the fee is \$70. To sign up, contact Kristen Bunting, Golden Gate Audubon office manager, at 510.843.2222.

## Fall San Francisco Classes

### Wild Birds of The Bay Area: Fall Migrations

Eddie Bartley

First meeting Oct. 5 at Marin Headlands to study raptor migration. Lectures Tuesday Oct. 7 – Oct. 28, 2008 7 – 9 p.m. Four additional field trips on Sundays following each Tuesday lecture culminating with a day trip to the Delta. Fee is \$80.

View raptors, waterfowl, and songbirds as they pass through in migration or arrive to set up for the winter, as well as over-wintering shorebirds and resident species.

Lectures held at the Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way (free parking in the museum lot). To register, contact Kristen Bunting, Golden Gate Audubon office manager, at 510.843.2222.

### Joe Morlan's Classes

**Field Ornithology I** Basic field skills: study of bird ecology, biology, evolution, and behavior. Part A (EA101): Tuesday, Sept. 9 – Oct. 21; Part B (EA105): Tuesday, Oct. 28 – Dec. 16.

**Field Ornithology II** North American birds including terns, jaegers, alcids, pigeons, and parrots. Part A (EA110): Wednesday, Sept. 10 – Oct. 22; Part B (EA115): Wednesday, Oct. 29 – Dec. 17.

**Field Ornithology III** Land birds including juncos, longspurs, grosbeaks, buntings, blackbirds, and orioles. Part A (EA120): Thursday, Sept. 11 – Oct. 23; Part B (EA125): Thursday, Oct. 30 – Dec. 18.

Evening classes endorsed by Golden Gate Audubon start in early September and meet from 7 – 9:15 p.m. at the Marina Middle School, 3500 Fillmore at Bay Street (free parking provided). Optional field trips may be arranged for weekends. Fees are \$140 for each seven-week course (\$125 for six-week EA120), with a \$10 discount if you register at least a week early. 415.561.1860. To enroll online: [www.evolveu.com/ce.ccsf](http://www.evolveu.com/ce.ccsf). Joe Morlan's website: <http://fog.ccsf.edu/~jmorlan>.

## Our Wish List

- A donated vehicle to transport tools and equipment to restoration sites and our staff and volunteers to various programs.
- Video and still cameras, as well as binoculars and telescopes.
- Your time. We need help with research projects and bird counts, education and restoration projects, and office projects. Learn more about the birds you love while you help make the Bay Area a safer place for them.

To donate any of these items, contact Kevin E. Consey, [kconsey@goldengate-audubon.org](mailto:kconsey@goldengate-audubon.org) or 510.292.6274

To volunteer, contact Jenn Robinson, [jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org](mailto:jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org) or 510.843.2222.

## Donations

Thank you for your generous donations to support our many conservation, education, and member activities!

### GOLDEN EAGLE (\$1000 AND MORE)

Anonymous, Miles R. & Mel McKey

### PEREGRINE FALCON \$500 TO \$999

Eleanor Briccetti, Goldman Sachs & Company (*Save the Quail*), Regina Phelps, Phil Price & Juliet Lamont

### LEAST TERN (\$200 TO \$499)

Richard Bachenheimer, Carol J. Donahoe, Pauline L. Fong, Theresa & Richard Horrigan, Rebecca R. & Lee G. Jackrel, Jerry Coe Metalsmith Inc., Suzanne Jones & Robert Elia, Claudine Marquat, Jane Maxwell, Dorothy Jo Anne & Thomas Mayer, Kieran J. McCormick, Oakland Museum National History Guild (*Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge*), Ann M. & Mike Richter, Marc D. Rumminger, Debra Love Shearwater, Lucretia & John Sias, Laura Yost-Spivy & Gregory P. Spivy, Shannon E. Wianeci

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### IN HONOR OF

**Eddie Bartley & Noreen Weeden, 100 Birds of Herons Head book:**

Dr. Meryl Gordon & Dr. Robert Schermer

**Don:** Gary L. Katz & Ilene Sakheim-Katz

**Susan Consey:** Morgan Stanley

**Golden Gate Audubon's habitat restoration programs:** Monique Ninove

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**Lucille Boero:** In memory of Barbara Brick-Cross

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### GRANTS

**David B. Gold Foundation:** Eco-Oakland & Eco-Richmond Programs

**Firedoll Foundation:** *Birds at Risk* Campaign

**National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Nature Restoration Trust:** Eco-Oakland Program

**The San Francisco Foundation:** Eco-Oakland & Eco-Richmond Programs

**Weeden Foundation:** Alameda Wildlife Refuge Campaign





## LOONS TO DUCKS

A tattered young Arctic Loon (*Gavia arctica*) at Bodega Bay, SON, Jun. 12-23 provided interesting comparisons to a similarly plumaged Red-throated Loon (SH, LH; mob). Jun. and July pelagic trips to the Farallon Islands, SF, were treated to a Brown Booby (DWi; AH, PS, oob).

## RAPTORS TO ALCIDS

On May 2, a juvenile Northern Goshawk flew north over Kirby Cove, MRN (TB, HB, LC). On the 15th, a Broad-winged Hawk passed over Fort Scott in the Presidio, SF (AK). A Pacific Golden-Plover stopped off at New Chicago Marsh in Alviso, SCL, Jul. 19-22 (BRe, FV, JT; mob). On May 3, Solitary Sandpiper made an appearance at Coyote Pt., SM (RTh; AE). The season's first Baird's Sandpiper was reported from Bodega Bay Harbor on Jul. 19 (BDo; oob). Hayward RS was a good source for additions to the ALA Big Year list, producing Baird's Sandpiper on Jul. 27 (JW, RSc) and Pectoral Sandpiper May 15 (BRi). New Chicago Marsh in Alviso, SCL, matched shorebird rarities with a Pectoral Sandpiper Jul. 17 (MM) and a Ruff Jul. 16-26 (MAA, ADM; mob).

Early May brought an influx of Franklin's Gulls: 3 to SF (BF); 2-4 along the SM coast (TP, RTh, AE, MBr, OJo, AE, AJ); 1 bird to PRNS, MRN (RSt); and 1 bayside visitor to Hayward RS, ALA (BRi; MR). A May 1 sea watch from Pigeon Pt., SM located 2 Glaucous Gulls and 2 Black-legged Kittiwakes, but the big surprise was a Little Gull (*Larus minutus*) (RTh). Presumably north-bound Glaucous Gulls stopped May 6 at the Russian River mouth, SON (IM, CW, JK, KW); and May 20 at Abbott's Lagoon, PRNS, MRN (NP, JP).

Up to 4 Common Terns lingered May 10 and 11 in Half Moon Bay, SM (DSi; AJ). In ALA, 22+ Black Terns patrolled the city of Hayward's water treatment ponds through mid-May (BRi; mob). Solo Black Terns visited water treatment ponds in Sunnyvale and Gilroy, SCL, in early May (JT, BB); Redwood Shores, SM, in early July (PK,



Clark's Nutcracker.

Tom Grey

BeK, fide GC); and salt pond A16 in Alviso, SCL, throughout July (BB; mob). Though nothing like last year's alcid invasion, Horned Puffins were sighted, beginning Jun. 29, at the Farallon Islands, SF (AH); Montara Lighthouse and Moss Beach, SM (BaK); and Bodega Head, SON (LB).

## DOVES TO THRASHERS

Along with the expected Empid migrants, Gray Flycatchers paused May 14-15 at Mt Davidson, SF (BF, DA; JC, BF, PS) and at Outer PRNS, MRN (RSt). On Jun. 13, Mt Davidson hosted an Eastern Phoebe (PS; DA). Eastern Kingbirds sought out water-side stopovers at Muir Beach, MRN, Jun. 3-4 (NF; KP); at Bayfront Park in Menlo Park, SM, on the 7th (LG, JF; PM, AE); and at Radio Rd. in Redwood Shores, SM, on Jul. 20 (RTh; DMa). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was photographed May 10-12 at Año Nuevo SR, SM (FB; MBr, OJo).

Yellow-throated Vireo was spotted Jun. 4 at North L., GGP, SF (HB). A Clark's Nutcracker sought montane habitat at El Polin Springs in the Presidio, SF, Jun. 16-18 (CL; mob). Rare CC visitors, 2 Purple Martins flew over Upper San Leandro Res. on Jul. 6 (BL). A probable Townsend's Solitaire was noted Jun. 6 in Terra Linda, MRN (JM). A Gray Catbird was photographed Jul. 24 at the UC Botanical Gardens in Berkeley, ALA (GW, fide PR).

## WOOD WARBLERS TO FINCHES

From mid-May to mid-Jun., 9-primaried passerines (wood warblers, icterids, and finches), are relatively more common as vagrants than 10-primaried passerines (tyrant flycatchers, mimids, thrushes, and vireos), and this spring was no exception. Most sightings were concentrated in traditional vagrant traps at Outer PRNS, MRN, the Presidio in SF, and the SM coast. Most notably, a Black-throated Green Warbler was located May 26 at the Fish Docks, PRNS (MBu; fide RC). Other vagrants included at least 1 Northern Parula, Palm and Black-and-white Warblers, 2 American Redstarts, a Summer Tanager, 8+ Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and 6 Indigo Buntings.

A flock of 50+ Yellow-headed Blackbirds joined the Red-winged Blackbirds in Alviso, SCL, in mid-May (DWe; BRe, BM). On Jun. 24, a Baltimore Oriole visited a feeder in Terra Linda, MRN (KJR). A Scott's Oriole wandered north to Coyote Pt. on May 15, a first county record for SM (RTh).

See Birding Resources at [www.goldengateadub.org](http://www.goldengateadub.org) for complete sightings data.

Semicolons separate original observer(s) from subsequent observer(s). Abbreviation "mob" = many observers; "oob" = other observers. Information is compiled from BirdBox transcripts and regional listservs; the author apologizes for any errors or omissions. Special thanks to Brent Plater for assistance in compiling data.

**Abbreviations for Observers:** ADM, Al DeMartini; AE, Al Eisner; AH, Alan Hopkins; AJ, Al Jaramillo; AK, Andy Kleinhesselink; BaK, Barbara Kossy; BB, Bill Bousman; BDo, Bill Doyle; BDu, Bob Dunn; BeK, Benjamin Knoot; BF, Brian Fitch; BL, Bob Lewis; BM, Bill Maney; BP, Bob Power; BRe, Bob Reiling; BRi, Bob Richmond; CL, Calvin Lou; CW, Chris Wood; DA, David Armstrong; DD, David Diller; DMa, Dean Manley; DMo, Dominik Mosur; DP, Don Pendelton; DR, Don Reinberg; DSh, Doug Shaw; DSi, Dan Singer; DSu, David Suddjian; DWe, Dave Weber; DWi, Dave Wimpfheimer; FB, Frank Balthis; FV, Frank Vanslager; GC, George Chrisman; GW, Gary Walter; HB, Herb Brandt; HC, Hugh Cotter; IM, Ian Morrison; JC, Josiah Clark; JF, Jeff Fairclough; JK, John Kelly; JM, Jennifer Matkin; JP, Jeff Perkins; JT, Jim Thomas; JW, Joanne Wallin; KJR, Karen Jo Rippens; KK, Kim Kreitinger; KP, Kathy Parker; KW, Ken Wilson; LB, Len Blumin; LC, Lew Cooper; LG, Laurie Graham; LH, Lisa Hug; MAA, Mary Ann Allen; MBr, Matt Brady; MBu, Mark Butler; ME, Mark Eaton; MM, Michael Mammoser; MR, Mark Rauzon; MZ, Matt Zlatunich; NF, Neill Fogarty; NP, Noel Perkins; OJa, Oliver James; OJo, Oscar Johnson; PC, Peter Colasanti; PD, Peter Dramer; PK, Peter Knoot; PM, Peter Metropulos; PMC, Pat McCulloch; PR, Phila Rogers; PS, Paul Saraceni; RB, Richard Bradus; RC, Rigdon Currie; RSc, Rusty Scalf; RSt, Rich Stallcup; RTe, Ryan Terrill; RTh, Ron Thorn; SC, Sue Cossins; SH, Steve Howell; TB, Tim Behr; TP, Tim Perkins; WE, Will Elder

**Abbreviations for Counties and Others:** ALA, Alameda; CC, Contra Costa; Cr., Creek; EEC, Environmental Education Center; GGP, Golden Gate Park; L., Lake; MRN, Marin; Mt., Mount; N., North; NAP, Napa; NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; OSP, Open Space Preserve; PRNS, Pt Reyes National Seashore; Pt., Point; Rd., Road; Res., Reservoir; RP, Regional Park; RS, Regional Shoreline; S., South; SB, State Beach; SCL, Santa Clara; SF, San Francisco; SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; SR, State Reserve; WPCP, Water Pollution Control Plant

have been working with the North Richmond Shoreline Academy to craft a conservation vision for the shoreline. Our goal in 2007-2008 was to begin the process of expanding our environmental education efforts into North Richmond while conducting a needs assessment in the community. We strengthened our existing partnerships in North Richmond to build more community support, and surveyed schools to determine environmental education needs and community interest in our programs.

We began Eco-Richmond with a pilot program in two classes at Lake Elementary in San Pablo. In the fall of 2007, the children received an introductory lesson on basic ecology specific to their community, including a review of the geographic features of their local environment. The students then assessed their schoolyard as habitat for hummingbirds and other wildlife. Next, the children learned about the myriad flora and fauna native to their local environment and discussed how pollution can affect those organisms. They also learned about how to reduce the amount of toxicity in their homes and their community and received informational packets to share with their families. The handouts illustrated the effects that toxins have on both human and natural systems and encouraged the children and their family members to conduct an inventory of their household products. Recipes for natural alternatives to each product were provided in both Spanish and English.

These classes prepared the students for their field trip to Point Pinole Regional Shoreline. In the spring of 2008, with help from three volunteers with expertise in local birdlife, GGA staff engaged the students in three, one-hour activities: marine debris education and shoreline cleanup, plankton and estuarine invertebrate study

(using field microscopes), and a bird census.

On the day of the field trip, we asked students, parents, and teachers to give us their opinions of the program and their ideas about future involvement in the use and conservation of the shoreline. All of the mothers agreed that such a program would be welcomed and supported at the children's school. Sylvia Whitson, a first-year teacher at Lake Elementary who participated in the pilot program, shared her gratitude for Golden Gate Audubon's work, "There is nothing like this at our school. There are few opportunities and limited funding for the kids to do anything science-related, especially with their families. And we certainly don't have any opportunities to go out into the community and do hands-on fieldwork." Her comments were echoed by Sherry Nolan, the science curriculum developer for the West Contra Costa County School District, "There is nothing like this program in the whole district! It's not only needed in this community, it's very much needed in all of the West Contra Costa County School District."

#### HOW YOU CAN HELP

We look forward to implementing this exciting and innovative program within the schools adjacent to the North Richmond Shoreline and are confident that the children and their families will enjoy the many natural discoveries to be made within a region rich in biodiversity. If you are interested in volunteering for any future Eco-Richmond Program (or Eco-Oakland Program) endeavors, please contact Anthony DeCicco or Jennifer Robinson at the Golden Gate Audubon office.

—Anthony DeCicco, Eco-Oakland Program Manager

#### GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY

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